

From lab to industry: Creating and realizing the added value of modified atmosphere packaging

Dr. Gary Ward

CTO, StePac L.A., Ltd., Tefen Industrial Park, Tefen, Israel

gary@stepac.com

Abstract

Modified atmosphere packaging, when used correctly, can preserve freshness of fresh fruits and vegetables and thereby improve the quality reaching the consumer, enable market expansion and help reduce carbon footprint by reducing global wastage (estimated to be as high as 40-50%) and often facilitating sea as opposed to air freight. Over the years, StePac has developed tailor-made modified atmosphere packaging products for over 60 different fresh produce items. Since the performance of such packaging products is highly dependent on postharvest handling, the path to realizing their added value is riddled with many obstacles. In developing countries, where the value of such packaging for export to distant markets is high, there is often a lack infrastructure and pioneering work then needs to be undertaken by growers and packers to realize the potential opportunity. In addition, packaging, developed under laboratory conditions, often need to be fine-tuned to better meet real life conditions, characterized by temperature fluctuations and high relative humidity environments. The presentation focuses on the trials and tribulations of developing markets for modified atmosphere packaging, with case studies demonstrating how Stepac has successfully achieved this goal and become a market leader as a postharvest solution provider.